**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 17-21-80, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO CHANGE OF VENUE IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT IF A PERSON CHARGED WITH A CRIMINAL OFFENSE IS A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, MAGISTRATE, OR CIRCUIT JUDGE, IT IS REBUTTABLY PRESUMED THAT A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL TRIAL CANNOT BE OBTAINED IN A COUNTY IN WHICH THE DEFENDANT SERVED AND THAT THE VENUE IN THIS CASE MUST BE CHANGED TO ANOTHER COUNTY.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 17‑21‑80 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 17‑21‑80. (A) The circuit courts ~~shall~~ have power to change the venue in all criminal cases pending ~~therein~~ in the circuit court, and over which they have original jurisdiction, by ordering the record to be removed to another county in the same circuit. The application for removal must be made to the judge sitting in regular term by some party interested, by the solicitor of the circuit, or by the accused, supported by affidavit that a fair and impartial trial cannot be had in the county where ~~such~~ the action or prosecution was commenced. The State ~~shall have~~ has the same right to make application for a change of venue that a defendant has in cases of murder, arson, rape, burglary, perjury, forgery, or grand larceny; provided, that no change of venue ~~shall~~ may be granted in ~~such~~ these cases until a true bill has been found by a grand jury. Four days’ notice of ~~such~~ application in civil and criminal cases ~~shall~~ must be given to the adverse party, and if a change is ordered, it ~~shall~~ must be to a county in the same judicial circuit; provided, further, that ~~such~~ the adverse party to whom notice is given ~~shall have~~ has the right to waive it. The circuit judge ~~shall have~~ has the power, upon application made to him by either party, upon proper cause shown, to shorten or extend the time for the hearing of the application for a change of venue.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (A), if a defendant in a criminal case was a law enforcement officer, magistrate, or circuit judge at the time the offense was committed, there is a rebuttable presumption that a fair and impartial trial cannot be had in a county in which the defendant served at the time of the commission of the offense, and upon motion of any party, with notice as provided for in subsection (A), the action, if brought in that county, must be moved to another county and in the case of a circuit judge, to a county in another judicial circuit.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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